The Restoration of the Kahana Chapel
(Synopsis of a report given by Kenneth W. Baldridge)

For many years the Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawaii, has been in the process of developing Kahana Valley as a “living” state park. Among the various projects in different stages of progress are reconstruction of the Huilua Fishpond, re-establishment of traditional Hawaiian agriculture—especially taro, if practical—development of hiking trails and location of camping areas. One project that has been given very high priority by both the State Parks personnel and valley residents has been the restoration of the Mormon Chapel, with which I have been very closely involved over the past few years.

I have met with valley residents and on several occasions have taken BYU-Hawaii students and ward youth groups to the chapel for the purpose of cleaning up around the building in preparation for restoration work. I have met with Suzette Soucie and A. J. Garza of the prize-winning architectural firm, Designare, and they have now submitted a proposal to the State which hopefully will lead to the project of restoration getting underway.

The exact age of the building has yet to be determined. An LDS chapel was dedicated in Kahana in 1888 and we feel quite sure that this building goes back to the early 1900’s, at least, but we cannot definitely say that this building is the one that was dedicated over a century ago. Research continues.

Since there seems little doubt that this is the oldest LDS structure still standing in Hawaii we as the Mormon Pacific Historical Society are keenly interested in its preservation. As a church supposedly interested in history, our track record here in Hawaii has been less than outstanding as we have seen our historic buildings disappear one after another. Let’s hope this time that we, with the cooperation of the State of Hawaii and the residents of Kahana Valley, can save a most interesting structure.